

Pakefield Coastal Change

Communicating Our Awareness

Newsletter No.1
November 2019

Coastal Partnership East (CPE), on behalf of East Suffolk Council, would like to share their awareness of current coastal change issues at Pakefield, and openly respond to community concerns via this quarterly newsletter. The next edition will be available in early February 2020 & contain details of an upcoming consultation event that we would like you, as stakeholders, to be involved with. See reverse for more.



Situation Summary

The soft cliffs of southern Pakefield stand behind a narrow beach. When local sea levels are elevated during storms & tidal surges, the beach can no longer provide a natural defence to the cliffs and there are no man-made defences along this stretch of coast.

In the last decade, the extent of actively eroding cliff has crept northwards; it now covers the Pakefield Caravan Park frontage. The long term average rate of cliff retreat has doubled from 1 to 2 metres per year. This coastal change could well be linked to the mobile landform known as Benacre Ness. If the Ness continues to migrate Northwards, as it has been for some time, the current phase of erosion will be succeeded by a period of beach growth. Pakefield beach *could* regain it's width and provide cliff protection within 30 years from present *if* current trends continue – but in the mean time, erosion will persist. We recognise that this presents challenges for people living locally and this is why we want to work with you.



Photos above looking south (left) & north (right) show the beach cliff formed by wave action & erosion. Photo taken 04/11/19 © L.Goodman.

Recent Erosion

During the first week in October the highest tide of 2019 coincided with a tidal surge. In addition, north-easterly swell meant sea water levels exceeded the elevation of the cliff toe south of Arbour Lane. The cliff face responded to the instability by slumping, sliding and toppling back to a stable angle of repose. Prolonged rainfall on 06/10/19 washed more loose material and vegetation down the cliff face. High spring tides & windy weather brought destructive waves to Pakefield again in the last week of October, lowering beach levels & leaving a prominent beach cliff.

Photo (left) taken 02/10/19 at spring high tide, looking south at the sea meeting the cliff toe. Note the metal debris in the foreground. It is being progressively exposed by the process of erosion acting on the beach and cliffs. A member of the community has accumulated the debris at the cliff toe © L.Goodman.

Coastal Responsibility

The land atop the actively eroding cliff south of Arbour Lane, is privately owned by Pakefield Caravan Park (PCP). Despite significant land loss, it remains land owner responsibility to maintain a safe cliff face environment, to remove their assets before they fall on to the beach & clear debris that obstructs or creates a hazard for beach users. The Crown Estate own the sea bed & foreshore up to the high water mark.

It is therefore not the obligation of CPE to remove the metal and concrete WWII debris from the beach, but we are encouraging and working with the land owners to manage this issue.



The warning sign on Pakefield beach that read; **"Cliff Hazards Ahead - Dangerous access along beach near unstable cliffs at high tide - Do not proceed south near cliff base"** has been removed due to erosion. A replacement will be installed in an appropriate location. Please heed the safety notices published on www.coasteast.org.uk & social media which advise walkers to keep a safe distance from the actively eroding, unstable cliffs.

Shoreline Management Plan (SMP)

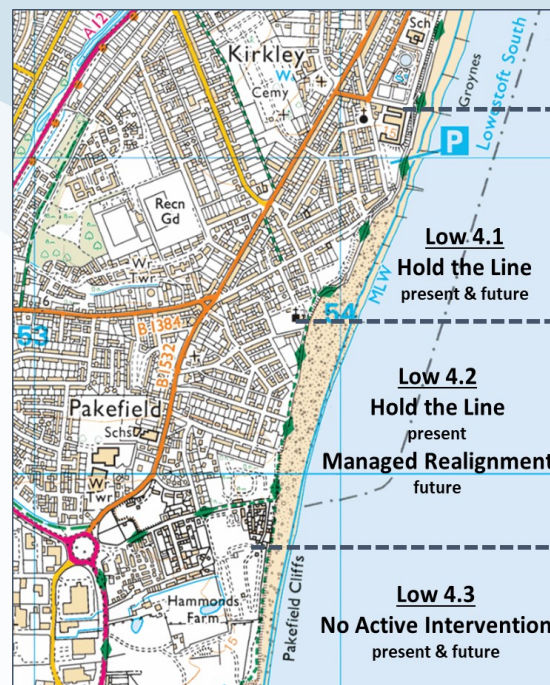
Policy Review for Pakefield

Since the rate of coastal erosion has accelerated faster than predicted since the current SMP was adopted in 2011, we are looking to review all the current coastal data and review the Shoreline Management Policy units Low 4.2 & Low 4.3 (see map). These neighbouring units currently have different management policies, as the map shows. As part of this project the local community will be a key stakeholder in discussions and decisions. You can read the current SMP information here:

www.suffolksmp2.org.uk/ (navigate to the 'Approved SMP' tab and find Pakefield's policy within '[PDZ 1- Lowestoft to Benacre Ness](#)').

Next Steps

- ◆ CPE will award the project to an external consultancy company.
- ◆ The aim is to begin the study in early February 2020.
- ◆ Project information will be shared via this newsletter, CPE website, social media, local press & posters.



Map of policies & unit boundaries for Pakefield.



Tides, Sea Level & Surges

High tide occurs approximately every 12 hours. Spring tides occur approximately twice a month when the phase of the moon is Full or New. Some spring tides bring higher water levels than others. CPE monitor the tide, weather and surge forecasts to determine flood & erosion risk. Erosion inducing conditions at Pakefield are commonly brought about by the coincidence of Spring high tides with sustained, strong, northerly winds. This drives a surge of water down the North Sea and increases wave action on the shore.

For more information

- ◆ For Lowestoft's tide times for the following 28 days visit the 'National Tidal & Sea Level Facility' website www.ntsfl.org
- ◆ Search for '**Latest surge Forecast for Lowestoft**' to see the National Oceanography Centre's storm surge forecast for Lowestoft. Storm surge models use short term weather forecasts, & can therefore only reliably predict two to five days ahead.
- ◆ CPE regularly consult the **Met Office**, **Wind Finder** and **Magic Seaweed's websites** for weather monitoring.

Future Newsletters:

Available online:

www.coasteast.org.uk

CPE Contact Information:

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Photos (above & below) taken 08/10/19 showing active erosion of the cliffs in SMP7 policy unit Low 4.3
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Coastal Partnership East (CPE) represents East Suffolk Council as the local risk management authority. We collaborate with other statutory bodies and stakeholders, endeavouring to achieve mutually appropriate outcomes. Due to the designation of Pakefield to Easton Bavents Site of Special Scientific Interest, Natural England will be key partners in this project and we seek support from the Environment Agency with respect to any coastal flooding and erosion risk management issues.